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# The Rouen Post, October-November-December 1949

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# THE ROUEN POST

Base Hospital 21 — World War I

21st Gen. Hosp. — World War II

A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ROUEN POST No. 242  
AND ALL FORMER MEMBERS OF B.H. 21 and 21st. G.H.



Cathedral and Market Place  
Rouen, France

## A WORTHY CHRISTMAS

by

The Rt. Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill

*God so loved the world that He gave.* Here is to be found the deepest truth of Christmastide as well as the answer to our greatest need. No thoughtful person can view the world scene with complacency. The headlines of any newspaper of any day reveal conditions of chaos, of selfishness, of tragedy, caused by human waywardness. The confusion of mind and of spirit has an evitable effect upon the outward and especially the inner life of every one of us. There is the temptation to try any method to escape from the importunities of the present. But there can be no escape. We must face facts as they are.

In history we find the great fact of Christmas. God so loved the world. This is God's creation, we are all of us the children of our Father. It is the love of God, made so crystal clear in the gift of Jesus Christ, which gives us the power to hope, and to trust.

Christmas means the laughter of children, the sharing of gifts, the joy of home, of family and of friends — all we must never forget because *God so loved that He gave.* The only Christmas worthy of the name is that which draws us in thankful consecration into presence of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

\* \* \*

At this Holiday Season, let us appreciate more the things of real value ☆ Family ☆ Friendships ☆ Good Health. May it be your privilege to have all these things the coming year.

BILL ENGEL



# THE ROUEN POST

## GRETHE WAS THERE

### 'Twas the Week Before Christmas

And all through the house were gift wrappings, labels, ribbons, and in the midst of this mess lay Dinah the Dachsie, I said "lay" because she couldn't walk, she was tangled in the wrappings and clawing at her nose where a Christmas seal coyly spelled the message "Do not open before Christmas!"

As I sat relaxing with a cup of coffee and a cigarette I got to thinking of how different Christmas of the past years had been. It's a funny thing, after having real Danish Christmas at home every year for 35 years, even though it took some fancy finagling to get off Christmas eve and



Knudsen and Dinah

make sure I wasn't on night duty at that time, the war came along, and I spent my first Christmas away from home, in North Africa to be exact. I'll freely admit that I dreaded it, and I was not alone in my dread, as I learned when a group of us got together, and after a few glasses of French wine we found we were all talking about Christmas at home. After a heated discussion on what the exact hour was at home, we all tried to visualize what the folks were doing. It was rather disappointing, we discovered that with the difference in time, they were all probably sound asleep!

### Africa 1942

Christmas eve at Bou Hanifia in 1942 was a beautiful evening. There was a full moon over the Atlas mountain tops and about 6 p.m. a truckload of our pals arrived. All were officers of the First Armored Division, who had sailed on the Mariposa with us from England, and were stationed about 45 rugged, mountainous miles away from us over near St. Cloud, Arzew, Mascara, Perregeaux, and Mostaganum. Several of the girls had been excused in the p.m. as we had very few patients, because we had only been set up 10 days in this location, and they had decorated the little Catholic church on the premises with a whole wall of green foliage and red roses behind the altar. It was very pretty. The mess hall served a special dinner, and later there was a party for the French, Spanish and Arab children in the vicinity.

The men in our outfit had trimmed a sorry looking undernourished and scrubby mountain pine. But the trimmings were ingenious and beautiful. The artistic boys had cut out no. 10 cans from the kitchen into shining stars, angels, and perfectly stunning Christmas-tree ornaments. Then we strung the colored hard candy found in C-Ration cans, into long garlands that were surprisingly effective. We had all dug deep in our duffel bags and donated any little thing that would make a gift for a child or teenager. Dolls had been made of old "civilian" underwear and powder-puffs and stuffed with almost anything a girl might have with her. Fancy wrappings were made with white shelf paper and mercurochrome stripes, dots and figures painted on them and tied with colored bits of ribbon and yarn we had with us. Tin foil from cigarette packages made shiny silver wrappings for the teensey packages. Carols were sung in English, French and Spanish. Music played, and someone found a whole slew of Champagne in Oran. 'Nuff said. At mid-night we all went to the little Catholic church in a body and our chaplain, Father McCarthy, went

through the mass and preached in Spanish, which nearly all French in this area used.

Our guests were going to be billeted with the officers and spend the next day with us, but then the emergency order came thru, Darlan had been assassinated and all the men were immediately alerted back to their outfits. So, because of that, our whole week was dateless and under "strict alert" and our New Year's eve was likewise ruined as we had to spend it with the people we worked with all the time.

### Powder Puff Trees in Naples

Christmas 1943 came after we had been two weeks in Italy. We were then living in Terme Agnano, sulphur fumed curative baths in an old crater near Naples. In case you didn't know, sulphur fumes smell like rotten eggs or an old bone and hide dump, what do they call it? Well, the French call it an abattoir and brother, in plain American, it stinks. We had spent the better part of the two weeks ripping out the old bathtubs stained brown by the dark sulphur water, in order to make nurses' boudoirs.

Some of the baths were the sunken built-in type with three steps down. We tried putting our army cots in the tub, but the dampness and stench was too much, so from somewhere we got boards and made a floor over the tub's edges and thus, instead of a walk down affair we had a walk up affair like a throne. Ants, mildew and mold were a few other delicate situations to be dealt with. But in Naples it was beautiful mild weather at Christmas, we could each buy a lovely little tree for our room, we could also buy fresh gardenias, roses and all sorts of fresh flowers for little money. But we couldn't get a single ornament. With the usual feminine ingenuity we girls bought dozens of gaily colored eiderdown powder puffs and hung them on our trees. The effect was startling. All the colors of the rainbow, and because they were fuzzy they looked like little birds, colored snowballs (we couldn't get white), or little animals on our trees. It was very funny and definitely different.

The First Armoured fellows, by now "old friends of the family" of 21st G.H. had preceded us to Italy by half a day. They were with us, and had also discovered that flowers were available, so we all had flower offerings from our current admirers in our rooms and sported big corsages. Last but not least, we were permitted to wear formals that night. What a thrill for us and for the men to see us in nice feminine clothes. But just as 'tho' it was too good to be true, we were dancing happily in the big concert room of the spa, and couldn't smell the nasty old sulphur anymore, the war decided to make itself known again. A storm blew up in tornado proportions and front line evacuation hospitals, then near the Garigliano river and the town of Venafro, 25 miles away, were blown down and we had some 3 or 400 patients coming in and no hospital building available. We all changed clothes laid aside our formals and "pinks" and pulled on the old fatigues, started putting tents up in a high wind. The only reason we made the grade was, that the crater acted as a sheltering bowl. Linens and supplies were issued poste haste and we worked like beavers and got all those poor, tired, bedraggled and wet patients under roofs by 3 a.m. Our visitors from other outfits pitched in and helped, it was a fine piece of work, done with cheerful cooperation.

### "Three's the Charm"

"Alle gode gange er tre" or three's the charm, as we say in English. That applied to our third and last Christmas abroad, 1944, this time in France and that was a lulu. I was on night duty in the head injury and spine paralysis wards, the most hopeless and depressing department, and at the same time the wards that afforded the most work. Beds to change over and over, feeding to do, serious cases to watch, backrubs every hour for the paralyzed ones, rows upon rows of vacant stares from boys with half their brain shot away, doomed to be hopeless and helpless "vegetables". Great big six-footers, now emaciated to half their normal weight by reason of atrophied muscles that received no commands from a severed spinal column, severed by a shell fragment or a machine gun bullet. A depressing and heart-breaking Christmas eve, with no one but we two nurses,



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to enjoy the pretty little trees set up in the wards. Worse too, because we were so sure we would have been home for this third Christmas.

## Lone Airplane Gunner Attacks

The patients had been settled for the time being, a group of nurses had just left after singing carols in the ward, lights were out and Betty Brooks and I were trying to chart, but our eyes were all messed up with tears, those carols had done it, that was the last straw. It was 10:30, the moon was shining in thru the windows, we were at least 400 miles from the Ardennes Wald fighting and the Battle of the Bulge. Well at least we were safe. Just then we heard a plane motor, all lights in the area went out, the plane came near, in fact it was inches from the window and the lone pilot, probably with some idea of getting himself a medal, was shooting thru the windows with a machine gun. A bullet passed between Betty and I and imbedded itself in the office wall. Twice this crazy German circled the 30 odd buildings of the area, each marked with a huge red cross on a white field that gleamed forth in the moonlight, unmistakable to a pilot with its international message "Hospital".

And still he poured bullets thru the walls, and to add spice, dropped small anti-personnel bombs that blew up our laboratory, and made a few direct hits on many of our personnel returning by the area roads from a movie given that night. No bed patient was hurt, miraculous as it may seem, because they were all lying down. However, several were hurt jumping into ditches, etc., for shelter, many civilians were hurt and the operating rooms were busy all night. The flyer left after two complete rounds of the place. A nightmare of a Christmas eve if ever I saw one.

## Aftermath

New Year's eve I was off night duty, and we were dancing in the mess hall. We had had two air alarms and were standing in the dark waiting for orders when suddenly we heard close anti-aircraft. The ack-ack in the nearby town Epinal, I believe it was, had "bagged" a German plane, identified as the same one that went over Christmas eve. We stood outside silently while we watched that plane fall to earth like a shooting star and explode as it struck the ground. That flyer had tried for his last medal for shooting at hospitals.

Then it was suddenly all over, we were home to have a normal Christmas with our family. We had three, '45, '46 and '47; then Mom and I went to Denmark in '48, and this year Dad will be in Denmark and we will be in Virginia. That's two more we are apart. Will we all be together next year I wonder? It seems that the war has changed the whole pattern of our life. Christmas apart before the war was unthinkable, but now we take it as a matter of course. In a way I'm glad I got over the hump of that first Christmas away from home, it makes one's mind more elastic. So there you have the story of a few Christmases in the life of one gal, and true to my column title I can say, "Grethe Was There".

## THE 1949 ARMISTICE PARTY

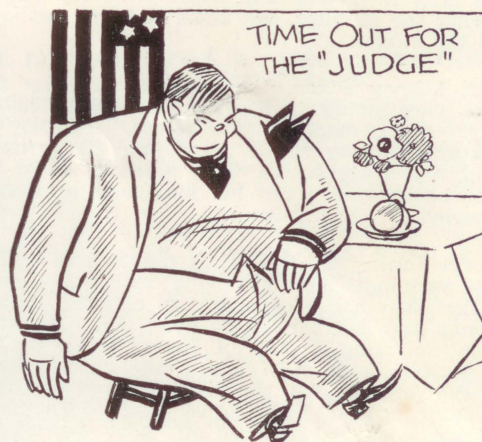
Again the Armistice Party was a very pleasant event. While not as well attended as those of the past, it was not lacking in color and conviviality. 'Twas sort of a family gathering with most everyone behaving themselves which was not always true when Rouen Post was in it's infancy and the veterans of Base Hospital were younger and gay-er.

It was held at the "Barn" in St. Louis County. The building is an old-fashioned barn which has been fitted for such gatherings as the Rouen Post Party. The members of the 21st General had been there before becoming a part of old 242. To most of the troops of World War I it was a new spot.

Having the wives at these functions has not only added much color, culture and gayety but put them on a much higher plane. Not that Rouen Post parties have been a discredit to either of the units or our departed contemporaries—but there is now a touch or refinement. The lads arrive in better condition than in the early days of our traditional Armistice celebrations. There was a time when many B.H. 21 veterans gathered early in the day and continued into the wee hours of the next.

Those were the days when Dr. Earl Padgett would fly from Kansas City, "Doc" Gilbert would come by "mule train" from Arkansas and Jolly Judge Neely by motor from Marion, Illinois. Each of these characters was a pretty rugged individual (Earl Padgett has since passed away but we shall forever cherish the memory of our association with him) who could stay with the best in mental, physical or "liquid" combat.

We always had a secret admiration for the Judge's staying powers until one Armistice night some ten years ago. As was his annual custom, the best man with the African dominoes in the British Expeditionary Forces, drove in from Marion for the occasion. During the dinner, for the first time in all of the years we had known him, "he took a time out". The story was that "Doc" Gay, Jim Costen, Ritchey Williams and Art Melville had "accidentally" met in a Sixth street "beer stube" to test the Judge's capacity—that they had a pre-arranged program which they followed. The Judge had not reckoned with such wickedness as these elbow-benders had perpetrated and the result was an overdose of early Armistice celebration.



For a while it seemed as if the jovial Marion pharmacist was thru for the evening but after a brief nap he surprised everyone by staging a comeback which would have done credit to the late "Beaver" Byrns. His recovery was so complete that he afterward assumed charge of the gathering, which had since moved into the Melbourne taproom, and was the maestro in the songs of World War I. We had not witnessed the phenomena before or since.

\* \* \*

We have drifted from 1949 to yesteryear. For those of us who still have a deep emotional pull for our unit and it's personnel 'tis well there has been a change. Should Junior Lattner, Truman Drake, Stan Hampton, Earl Shepard, Gayland Hagelshaw, "L.C." Boemer, Jimmy Rose and some of the others come to these affairs, unfettered, we of W.W.I would be greatly outclassed. As it is with the exercise of certain amount of restraint on their parts that we oldsters are able to hold our own. On a couple of occasions we tested our staying powers when there were no wives present and we came out second best. Guess with whom?

It was an hilarious evening for the distinguished young dental surgeon, Carl Lattner, who we understood did a bit of "polishing up" during the afternoon. By the time the midway point of the evening had been reached by most of us our gallant hero was far and beyond us and became the "life of the party". The rascal had a bit of devilry in him. He would entice some unsuspecting wife, other than his Mary, to sit on his lap and before she was comfortably seated she would find herself on the floor, a premeditated act if there ever was one.

To further emphasize his colorful mood the good doctor came fittingly garbed. We presume it was the latest in men's fashions—or perhaps it is his own creation. Nevertheless, it was something we had not seen before or since—and we are wondering. It was a tricky



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thing, a navy blue suit, at least, we think it was a suit as the coat and trousers matched in color. The coat was form fitting, without collar or lapels and equipped with heavy brass buttons. We endeavored to learn something of the origin of this creation but our efforts were fruitless.

\* \* \*

Two former 21st Generalites and their wives were with us for the first time that we remember, Dr. and Mrs. George Wulff and Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Cook. Earl Shepard sprang a surprise on the gang by escorting Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Moore, lately of Detroit but now residing in Kirkwood, Missouri, to the party. Mrs. Moore was Eugenia Slobarian.

\* \* \*

We pulled a fast one on the unsuspecting Harry and Mrs. Kurka, Mrs. Jimmy Rose, Dr. and Mrs. Cook when we asked Dr. L. C. Boemer to explain to them the latest scientific method he has for the increased production of turkeys. This was explained in part in our last issue. After getting the doctor started on his explanation of the system we retreated to the bar with Jimmy Rose. An hour later L. C. had only reached the functional part of applying the stirrups. We never did find out when he reached the climax.

\* \* \*

With Forney Dixon, the regular bartender for our functions vacationing in Florida, Chairman Dave Kerr took over—and a masterful job he did. However, he had an assistant who served Dr. Ernst and the writer good old Haig and Haig scotch with a lemon soda. Forney need not be worried about his job because of an occasional period of absenteeism.

\* \* \*

George Jordan and Bill Stack chauffeured by Ritchey Williams were quite late in arriving, with the bewhiskered excuse that they had been unable to find the place. Dave Kerr's map and instructions on how to find the spot did not seem confusing to any of the rest of us. There is a long stretch between Woodson road on the east and Lindbergh boulevard on the west without a tavern so it isn't any wonder they drove past McDonnell road where they should have turned off. They weren't looking for the road. Their habits are too well known to us to accept such an alibi. And they left early, apparently to retrace their steps fearing they had missed a "spot".

\* \* \*

But the affair would not have been the huge success it was had it not been for those three winsome young maidens, Helen Bowen, Francie Ward and Amy Tabor. They not only provided the menu, an excellent one, but hauled the food to the meetin' place, served it, and remained to clean up the debris. Such service we have not had for some time—excepting by paid professionals. We'll give those gals the job at another time. Seriously, we are deeply indebted to Amy, Francie and Helen and are happy to spread the information into the records.

\* \* \*

We thank Dr. David Nafe Kerr and his committee for a most pleasant evening.

\* \* \*

### CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PARTY

Another fine party is in the making and will be held on December 28 at the Wilshire-Hamilton Hotel. It will be mainly for the "kiddies" with favors and games and entertainment by that fine group of St. Louis business men, members of The St. Louis Shrine, known as the Hayshakers. They are costumed as described by their name, are first rate musicians and general entertainers. Last year the parents as well as the children enjoyed their program. The nice thing about it is the Hayshakers get "a boot" out of entertaining children.

\* \* \*

### DIVISION NAMES OFFICERS

Dr. Edwin C. Ernst, 2 Schultz road, Oakland was elected president of the Missouri Division of the American Cancer Society, last month, at Jefferson City. Other officers are:

Dr. Everett Sugarbaker, Jefferson City, vice-president; J. Ray Schmalhorst, Springfield, secretary, and Edgar M. Eagan, Jefferson City, treasurer.

**IF YOU'VE STOPPED RUNNING FOR TRAINS AND WINTERS SEEM COLDER, YOU ARE GETTING ALONG QUITE NORMALLY.**



Dr. Allan Gilbert (right)

It seems to me they are building staircases steeper than they used to. The steps are higher, or there are more of them, or something. Maybe this is because it's so much farther today from the first floor to the second floor. I've noticed that nowadays it is getting harder to make two steps at a time. It's even harder to make one step at a time.

Another thing I've noticed is the small print they're using lately. Newspapers are getting farther and farther away when I hold them, and I have to squint to make them out. The other day I had to back half way out of a telephone booth in order to read the number on the coin box. It is obviously ridiculous to suggest that a person my age needs glasses, but the only other way I can find out what's going on is to have somebody read aloud to me, and that's not too satisfactory because people speak in such a low voice these days I can't hear them very well.

Everything is farther than it used to be. It's twice the distance from my house to the station now, and they've added a fair size hill that I never noticed before. The trains leave sooner too. I've given up running for them because they start faster these days when I try to catch them.

You can't depend on timetables any more, and it's no use asking the conductor. I ask him a dozen times a trip if the next station is where I get off, and he always says it isn't. How can you trust a conductor like that? Usually I gather up my bundles and put on my hat and coat and stand in the aisle a couple of stops away, just to make sure I don't go past my destination. Sometimes I make doubly sure by getting off at the station ahead.

A lot of things are different lately. Barbers no longer hold up a mirror behind me when they've finished, so I can see the back of my head, and my wife has been taking care of the tickets lately when we go to the theatre. They don't put the same material into clothes any more, either. I've noticed that all my suits have a tendency to shrink especially in certain places, such as around the waist or in the seat of the pants, and the laces they put in shoes nowadays are much harder to reach.

Even the weather is changing. It's getting colder in winter, and the summers are hotter than they used to be. I'd go away, if it wasn't so far. Snow is heavier when I try to shovel it, and I have to put on rubbers whenever I go out, because rain today is wetter than the rain we used to have. Drafts are more severe, too. It must be the way they build windows now.



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People are changing, too. For one thing, they're younger than they used to be when I was their age. I went back recently to an alumni reunion at the college I graduated from in 1943—that is, 1933—I mean 1923—and I was shocked to see the mere tots they're admitting as students these days. The average age of the freshman class couldn't have been more than seven. They seem to be more polite than in my time, though, several undergraduates called me "Sir" and one of them asked me if he could help me across the street.

On the other hand, people my own age are so much older than I am, I realize that my generation is approaching middle age (I define middle age roughly as the period between 21 and 110) but there is no excuse for my classmates tottering into a state of advanced senility. I ran into my old room mate at the bar and he'd changed so much that he didn't recognize me.

"You've put on a little weight, George," I said.

"It's this modern food," George said, "it seems to be more fattening."

"How about another Martini," I said. "Have you noticed how much weaker the Martinis are these days?"

"Everything is different," said George. "Even the food you get, it's more fattening."

"How long since I've seen you, George," I said, "it must be several years."

"I think the last time was right after election," said George.

"What election was that?"

George thought for a moment. "Coolidge," he said.

I ordered a couple more Martinis. "Have you noticed these Martinis are weaker than they used to be?" I said.

"It isn't like the good old days," said George, "remember when we'd go down to the speakeasy and order some orange blossoms, and maybe pick up a couple of flappers. Could they neck! Hot diggity."

"You used to be quite a cake eater, George," I said. "Do you still do the black bottom?"

"I put on too much weight," said George. "This food nowadays seems to be more fattening."

"I know," I said. "You mentioned that just a minute ago."

"Did I?" said George.

"How about another Martini," I said, "have you noticed the Martinis aren't as strong as they used to be?"

"Yeah," said George. "You said that twice before."

"Oh," I said—

I got to thinking about poor old George while I was shaving this morning. I stopped for a moment and looked at my own reflection in the mirror. They don't seem to use the same kind of glass in mirrors anymore.

Merry Christmas

Allan A. Gilbert

## CALIFORNIA 21ST GENERALITES ARE PLANNING A REUNION

Dear Bill:

Please publish this letter in the very next issue of the ROUEN POST if at all possible.

THIS LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO ALL 21sters. Here is the opportunity that you have all been waiting for! Good reason for a trip to California. We are now laying plans for a 1950 Reunion in Los Angeles and have set the dates... AUGUST 4th, 5th and 6th. The activating committee for the 1950 Reunion is composed of Bernard Kelber, Isabelle Kurtz, Arthur Nie, Morrie Weissman, Alice Elmore Nelson, Sherman McDowell and the writer. We have begun elaborate plans to make the affair an unforgettable one including a Friday night dance and cocktail party... a Saturday tour of the area including one of the movie studios... a Saturday night banquet in one of the showplaces of the West... a Sunday morning breakfast in one of the world's greatest and most famous Artist's Colonies and a trip through one of the ancient California Missions.

We have set the date to coincide with summer vacations and are using the ROUEN POST as one means to notify you well in advance so that you can plan now to take your vacation at the time of the Reunion.

We are fully aware that not many of you can definitely say right now, that you will be here for the convention. However, we have to arrange with the Chamber of Commerce for hotel reservations as soon as possible. As we must give them an approximate figure we are asking all of you who read this and who would like to come and feel reasonably sure that you may make it to let us know by return mail. This is in no ways binding upon you. Sometime in mid-1950 we'll send you reservation blanks and then and only then will it be binding.

Okay now, here's the information we want. If you would like to come and feel that you may make it... drop us a line on a penny post card or any other means you deem feasible. We also want to know how many will be in your party... wives, husbands and children. Be sure to send us your name, and complete address so that we can contact you later, direct. Don't delay... write tonight.

Mail all your correspondence to

DAVE HOLLANDER

524 W. GLEASON ST.

MONTEREY PARK, CALIFORNIA

Thanks

Dave

\* \* \*

## ST. LOUIS U. DEAN FAVORS VOLUNTARY HEALTH INSURANCE

Medical organizations should use less funds and effort criticising compulsory health insurance and make instead an all-out effort to develop voluntary health insurance plans throughout the United States, Dr. Melvin A. Casberg, dean of the St. Louis University School of Medicine, said.

Dr. Casberg spoke before a meeting of the League of Women Voters of St. Louis at Christ Church Cathedral.

### Urges Offensive Action

He said that defensive action rarely wins a battle and advocated that doctors take the offense with a positive plan that will "present an intelligent and positive solution to the problem of medical care for the needy."

"Should American medicine be socialized as has been the case in England and dominated by the welfare state, then the art of medicine may persist in a distorted sort of fashion but with the removal of incentive by the destruction of individual competitive enterprise the science of medicine will most certainly be dealt a blow from which it will never entirely recover," he declared.

### World's Medical Center

"The United States today is the medical center of the world for exactly the same reason that it is the industrial center of the world. This leadership has been achieved because of competitive individual enterprise."

"This freedom stimulates the physician to improve his art of practice in order that his patient may continue making such a (free) choice. Here the competitive element is introduced. Thus the responsibility for the health of the patient rests squarely on the doctor's shoulders and not on the shoulders of a government agent."

### Can Afford Medical Care

Dr. Casberg took issue with the argument by proponents of compulsory insurance that most Americans cannot afford proper medical care and that families with incomes of less than \$5000 a year need federal subsidies.

He said that in 1947 the American people spent \$10,000,000,000 a year for liquor, \$4,000,000,000 for tobacco, and \$2,000,000,000 for cosmetics, while spending in the same year less than \$2,000,000,000 for physicians' service.

Editor's note. Dr. Casberg, as we have previously reported, was a member of the 21st General.

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## ROUEN POST SIGNS ANOTHER

Dear Mr. Engel:

I am sorry it has taken me so long to take this step but I am happy to be able to continue with all my friends of the Post.

I shall be happy to help in any way you may find suitable.

Hoping to see you this week-end at the Armistice Party.

Sincerely,

Geo. Wulff



# THE ROUEN POST

## PRIVATE SAN WITHERS

Guy B. Withers, son of Dr. Sanford (Private San) Withers graduated from the University of Arizona, Tucson, June 1949. He lives in Denver with his widowed mother Mrs. Matilda B. Withers and is employed within the modest initial "business" tolerances of his degree of Bachelor of Business Administration. The San Withers's daughter JANE, a bit-elder to Guyboy is Mrs. Shirl Fox who lives in San Francisco, Calif. Her husband Shirl (ex-aviation 2d Lt., W.W. #2) is a G.I. dental student in San Francisco, and Jane is assisting husband's career prospects by working as a secretary in a San Francisco automobile firm. Guy approaches 22 ole, and Jane is just past 23. San Withers died in 1938. Widow "Brandy" (maiden name Branstetter) Withers is employed as a bookkeeper and secretary for a Denver household appliance firm.

\* \* \*

The colorful "Private" San Withers was esteemed by all B.H. 21 troops as one of the group of the dozen Senior Washington University Medical students in the overseas outfit "most likely to succeed". He did, as a cancer specialist in the Rocky Mountain States in his too few (15-18 years) of active medical practice. San was invalidated home from France in 1918, and he accomplished his medical graduation at Washington University and subsequently practiced under handicaps of considerably impaired health.

\* \* \*

The last time we saw San Withers was in May 1937. He came on from Denver, Colorado to attend our 20th Anniversary Reunion. Even though his stay with the unit in France was not too happy an experience due to ill-health and other circumstances, which will be described in a story following this, San had a deep affection for it. Being profoundly sentimental, he was deeply touched by the Reunion, the first Base Hospital 21 had attempted on a national scale. He departed for his home in Denver Saturday morning before it was over. San feared that the cocktail party which followed that evening might prove an anti-climax. "I don't want to spoil my memories of the Memorial Service and the dinner that followed," he said. "My skin is pretty thick, but the deep solemnity of that service in the Cathedral got under my hide".

Private Withers other unhappy experience at Rouen was the result of a clash with the high command of Base Hospital 21. This ultimately led to a mild form of revolt which was so aptly described by Bill Stack in the May, 1938 issue of The Rouen Post which follows:

\* \* \*

From Rouen Post May, 1938

## REVOLT IN ROUEN

The untimely death of Dr. Sanford Withers in New York last March, revived memories of a famous event in the annals of Base Hospital 21—the mysterious destruction of a newly erected jail or clink, as a guardhouse is called in the British army. Every veteran of Unit 21 remembers that rebellious outburst against military authority, but few are familiar with the details and names of the participants.

As a result of a controversy with First-Sergeant Hester, Private Withers had been brought before a summary court and sentenced to thirty days in jail. In imposing the sentence on Withers, the presiding officer failed to take cognizance of the fact that the military jails in the Rouen area were reserved for the exclusive use of British and French army offenders, but Major Murphy surmounted this problem by ordering Sanford to build his own place of incarceration on the hospital grounds. Indignant, but resigned to the futility of further resistance, Sanford carried out the Major's order and a few days later, a bell tent, surrounded by a high barbed wire fence, stood ready to confine its builder.

On the evening before the day set for Withers to begin his period of servitude, a group of disgruntled enlisted men sat around a table near the fireplace in an estaminet on the Route D'Elbeuf. Their mood was in accord

with the dreary November night; clouds of dead leaves swirled through the deserted inn garden; a cold rain tapped at the windows, and the wind crooned a doleful accompaniment to the babble of angry voices that drifted from the smoky tap-room. Sergeants, with one or two exceptions, were denounced as sadistic, boot-licking morons; the company cooks were classified as lazy, over-fed louts who slept while better men carried stretchers, and everyone agreed that British army rations were an insult to civilized palates. They criticized the Major's leadership, sneered at the cut of his whipcord breeches, and the First Sergeant was pictured as a demon in uniform—a friend who lay awake nights planning novel methods of harassing cultured gentlemen who had foolishly volunteered for army service instead of waiting for the draft.

This discussion of the inhuman qualities of those in power eventually led to the case of the unfortunate Private Withers, and as the evening wore on, the personal grievances of the captious group gave way to growing indignation at the sentence inflicted on their pal Sanford. After all, they maintained, old San had merely refused an order to carry an English patient pick-a-back from the receiving hut to a ward bed—and all agreed that the order was absurd in view of the fact that stretchers were available.

At this point Madame interrupted with the nightly warning that the military closing hour had arrived. The opponents of tyranny tossed off a farewell drink, paid the bill, and reluctantly withdrew from the cozy fireside to an empty, darkened hut on the camp grounds, where the conference was continued over a bottle of cherry brandy. It was agreed that a protest of some sort should be made against the severity of Withers's sentence and after several rounds of brandy someone evolved an idea. Why not tear down the jail that awaited Sanford—destroy that symbol of injustice, as the mobs of Paris had demolished a similar monument of oppression when they stormed the Bastille long ago. The suggestion met with unanimous approval, and after a parting drink to the success of the venture, the conspirators left the hut and stealthily headed for the clink.

Ten minutes later a pile of tangled barbed wire, uprooted posts and mangled canvas greeted an astonished British sentry as he approached the plot of ground set aside for the new jail. As his bewildered gaze surveyed the wreckage, the faint sound of swiftly receding footsteps floated through the November mists. The blow for justice had been struck.

Uncertain as to the degree of interest he should display over the destruction of American Army property by Americans, in a camp partially controlled by the British, the sentry stood non-plused for a moment and then decided to report the affair to the sergeant of the guard. As he turned from the wrecked jail, a man lurched out of the shadow of a nearby tent and approached with unsteady gait. He gave the name of Coogan—Private Edward Coogan—but when asked to explain his presence, Private Coogan became quarrelsome and abusive. He cursed the sentry, denounced the British Army and all its marmalade, and tossed in a few remarks uncomplimentary to King George, the Prince of Wales and Queen Mary's hats. Coogan's outburst, while vivid and highly descriptive, failed to reveal his reason for being in the vicinity, and the sentry escorted him to the guard tent where he was later turned over to Arthur Schanuel, sergeant in charge of quarters.





# THE ROUEN POST

Next morning the camp buzzed with excitement as news of the mutinous uprising spread swiftly through wards and barracks. Major Murphy charged Coogan with having participated in the destruction of the clink and threatened him with dire punishment unless he divulge the names of his accomplices. But threats of a sojourn in Leavenworth prison and the grief such a fate would bring to his aged parents, failed to change Coogan's story. He stoutly maintained that he knew nothing about the jail razing—that he had returned to camp somewhat the worst for wear after a tour of Rouen cafes and was merely trying to walk off the effects of too much cognac when he had the ill fortune to encounter the sentry.



Meanwhile, some rodent in khaki had furnished Major Murphy with the names of the men who had spent the evening in the Route D'Elbeuf cafe and after a careful perusal of the list, Holland (Chappy) Chalfant, Robert (Shorty) Richner, and this writer were called to the company office and asked to give an account of their whereabouts and activities of the night before. No reference was made to the destruction of the jail, but it was obvious that the Major and First-Sergeant Hester were morally certain that Coogan and the forenamed men were responsible for the nocturnal disturbance. But even a Unit 21 summary court would have lacked the hardihood to convict on evidence that amounted to no more than a strong suspicion, and after grilling the suspected men in a manner worthy of a district attorney, the Major was reluctantly forced to admit defeat. Chalfant and Coogan escaped unscathed but the investigation revealed that Richner and the writer had been out of camp without passes and the Major indirectly retaliated for the assault on the clink by causing them to be fined ten days pay for leaving the hospital grounds without permission. Despite popular belief to the contrary, Coogan's story was true. The clink was demolished by Sergeant Clinton Tobias and Privates Chalfant, Richner and Purcell.

\* \* \*

## MISCELLANY

### THE BARD OF OBLONG

(Illinois)

Ever since The Rouen Post has been in circulation one of Base Hospital 21's members has been trying to crash it's pages with poetry, hence the nick-name. Horace Barker has been a loyal member of the 21st of World War I and has deserved more consideration for his efforts than has been shown him in the past. These columns have reported very frequently of his guardianship of a certain recalcitrant member who showed a total disregard for military discipline. In fact, Horace was caricatured by Bill Stack in our latest issue. Evidently this added fuel to the Bard's poetic impulses and he has submitted another of his "gems". Because he has been such a loyal and philanthropic supporter of our paper we cannot ignore his one last request to "let the readers judge his efforts" rather than just one or two—and this we shall do. The address is just plain HORACE BARKER, OBLONG, ILLINOIS. But please spare us!

(No title was submitted with the lines.)

This wartime pal of mine has pushed on to great success,  
He has made a lot of money selling stocks and bonds,  
I guess,  
He pushes and he pushes, keeps clerks and filers on the jump,  
So more of that filthy lucre in his coffers he can dump.  
The thing that puts the push in this pushing, pushing man,  
He once pushed around excretia in a battered G.I. can.  
When his business day is over and he goes out with the boys,  
After sipping cocktails, there's nothing more he enjoys  
Than to reminisce of the war, and he loves to tell them how,  
He bucked the Army officers and was put into the hoose-gow,  
And smiles as he relates how they had him on the pan,  
And he pushed around excretia in a battered G.I. can.



When his darling great granddaughter comes and climbs upon his lap  
In his aged and feeble years, and says listen great grand pap,  
Tell me all about the war, and how you won the fight,  
And of Germans whom you killed out in no-man's land at night,  
And he say, no, no my child that must have been another man,  
I just pushed around excretia in a battered G.I. can.  
Let her be not disillusioned there's no need that she should know,  
Let him tell her of hard fought battles, the real truth let him forego.  
Let her think this her great grandfather was in the thickest of the fight,  
And was at the Kaiser's heels when he made that hasty flight.  
To her he is a hero, keep it from her if you can,  
That he pushed around excretia in a battered G.I. can.  
Editor's note: Full credit for selection of words, rhythm, punctuation et cetera should be given to the author. We have copied from the original manuscript just as it was submitted.

\* \* \*

Lt. Col. Karl H. Metz, D.C., 0-138403, stationed, since reactivation, at Fort Devens, Mass., is now on duty in the dental administration division of the Surgeon General's office, Washington, D.C. Col. Metz was with the 21st General in World War II.

\* \* \*

Col. and Mrs. Lee Cady have been vacationing in Mexico City, Mexico. We have an interesting card from the former Commanding Officer of the 21st General picturing "Palacio de Gobierno, Mexico, D.F." from which we quote: "Dear Bill: This picture card is a sort of reminder or an alibi exhibit to show where I am. I am much impressed with Mexico City and would like to spend more than a week here—but have business at Houston. Sincerely, Lee Cady."

\* \* \*

Prior to receiving the card from the Colonel's leave area we had a letter which we feel should be quoted: "Dear Bill: I found the letter attached from Bob Moore while sorting some papers recently.



# THE ROUEN POST

Our hospital is being expanded from 500 to 937 beds, and I am pretty busy. Gracia and I are getting away to Mexico City for a short breather on the first of December. Then I'll attend the organization meeting of The Texas Academy of Internal Medicine at Dallas on December 10 and 11. Then back to my work.

I liked your last edition and find myself becoming rather hungry for news of all the old gang between issues.

Regards to Mrs. Engel.

Sincerely,  
Lee Cady"

The letter from Dr. Robert Moore, Dean of the School of Medicine, Washington University to Dr. Cady dated May 26, 1949 we also quote:

"Dear Dr. Cady: I am sorry that I was not in the office when you called last week. I would have enjoyed seeing you and learning all about your activities in Texas. I would also have liked to have sent a greeting with you to the Reunion of the 21st General Hospital Unit. I had not learned of this meeting before. With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,  
Robert A. Moore"

Editor's note. We are certain that Dr. Sim Beam, Chairman of the Reunion Committee nor any of its members were aware that an invitation to attend had not been extended to Dr. Moore. We are humbly sorry for the oversight and ask that Dr. Moore accept our apology.

## LOUISE KNAPP REPORTS

We have a letter from Miss Louise E. Knapp, Director of the Washington University School of Nursing which we are particularly anxious to pass on to our readers.

"Dear Bill Engel: I am enclosing a small contribution so you will keep me on the mailing list of The Rouen Post. Each issue proves freshly interesting and keeps the group closer together between reunions. You have all been so kind, about including me in your parties, and I have thoroughly enjoyed them.

May I add one further word of appreciation for 'The Scholarship Fund for Nurses' It has proven so helpful that I trust the members who contributed to the Fund will find satisfaction in the grand job they are doing, in making it possible for young women to study in The Washington University School of Nursing.

Best wishes to you for the coming year.

Sincerely yours,  
Louise Knapp."

## 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

Thirty-five years of service in public school nursing ended December 22, 1949 for Miss Mary E. Stephenson, supervisor of nurses for the Board of Education of St. Louis. Miss Stephenson was a graduate of the Bethesda School of Nursing and was valedictorian of her class of 1904. She was a member of Base Hospital 21 during World War I and received the British Royal Red Cross for her service with the British General Hospital at Rouen France, 1917-1919.

Miss Stephenson was honored at a testimonial dinner at Hotel Statler just prior to her retirement from the school system. She was one of the first nurses in the school program and began her work July 14, 1914. Since 1920 she has been supervisor. She was presented with a scroll at the dinner commemorating her many years of service, by the Superintendent of Instruction Philip J. Hickey. Miss Stephenson celebrated her 70th birthday December 7, 1949.

We, of Rouen Post 242 and the members of both units are proud to have been associated with Mary E. Stephenson in World War I and in other activities since. She has been an exponent of loyalty which is best exemplified by her years of service to the children of St. Louis but also to the members of Base Hospital 21. We salute you Mary Stephenson and extend our heartiest and most sincere wishes for a happy retirement, which may endure for many, many years.

Room 310  
220 No. Fourth Street  
St. Louis 2, Mo.

## NURSES OF THE 21ST GENERAL, ATTENTION!

We have a letter from Charles Boyle, 38 Mozart Street, Boston, 30, Mass., in which he states he was a former patient of the 21st General Hospital and would consider it a pleasure if he could again see the nurses at the Medical Center at Naples, Italy. He has asked us to tell him when and where the next nurses reunion will be held. Not having a ready answer on the subject of a 21st General Nurses' "Reunion" we passed the letter on to "Frohby" Frohbieter for answer. Perhaps some of you girls remembering the lad can carry on from here.

## MAJOR HELEN M. DAVIS

From the Army, Navy and Airforce Register of November 12, 1949, we have the following: "Maj. Helen M. Davis (RA) (dietitian), has returned from three days' duty at the Signal Corps Photographic Laboratory in New York City where she served as technical adviser on the reproduction aspects of a new Army film, "Hospital Food Service Personnel Training."

Maj. Davis, who reported for duty in the Surgeon General's Office in August, recently completed graduate training in the Institutional Management at Teachers College, Columbia University. She was previously on the staff of the McCormack General Hospital, Pasadena, Calif. During the war she served overseas with the 21st General Hospital in Italy and with the Ninth Evacuation Hospital in Sicily and in France.

Dear Bill Engel: New Harmony, Indiana  
Here is my contribution for the "Rouen Post," small tho it is. You and your gang are doing a marvelous job. I'm awfully glad to be on your mailing list.

Best wish for a Merry Christmas and the New Year to all the members of both 21sts.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Lynn

So. Rockville City, N.Y.

Dear Bill:

Could not possibly let Xmas go by without contributing a small fee toward the "Rouen Post," which I enjoy reading so much and wishing all the members of the 21st General a very Merry Xmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

You know, it was Christmas, 1944 that I spent in Paris on my way from England to join the 21st General, a transfer that I have always been proud of. We were very unhappy to be restricted to our hotel on Christmas Day (it was during the Belgian bulge and German paratroopers were landing in Paris) but were glad to be held there when we heard that a bomb had been dropped on the 21st General, nothing more said. It was the bomb which landed near the water tower that Xmas, but we had visions of disastrous results.

Please note my change of address, and keep "The Post" coming to my new address.

Very sincerely,  
Mary A. Jenne

Dear "Ed"

Been a long time since you last heard from me. Well I was wondering if the Rouen Post was still being published, if so I would like to get the issues for the months of February 1949 to present. Yes its been that long since I have received any of the Rouen Posts.

I wanted to send a check along with this letter, but I thought I'd wait and be sure our swell publication is still in existence, I'm so far behind on the news of the old gang, I feel like a stranger.

I attended the graduating exercises of "Syd Levy" (lab man of 21st G.H.) Well he's a Chiropodist now, and will be opening his own office over in Oakland shortly.

Well Bill I hope I will be getting those back issues of the Post. My fondest regards to all.

Jim Hubbard  
P.S. My new address—251 Tingley St.  
San Francisco, Calif.

BILL ENGEL



# ROUEN POST

242

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PARTY

HAMILTON - WILSHIRE HOTEL

HAMILTON AT MAPLE

Wednesday Evening      December 28, 1949      6:30 P.M.

A party for the whole family. Last year we had a jolly, good time - and this one should be even better. There'll be favors for the kids and other attractions.

THE REAL ATTRACTION AGAIN will be the Hayshakers of the Shriners Band. Those inimitable entertainers had the children and grown-ups alike in a constant state of ecstasy.

The combination adds up to an evening of frivolity and fun. Come and bring the family.

Dinner will be "buffet" at \$2.00 for adults, with rates for the younger children. The usual additional for the "extras" will, of course, be added.

Please return the enclosed card promptly so that we may know how to plan.

THE COMMITTEE

David Nafe Kerr,  
Chairman





# "21 ON DECK"

THE  
ROUEN  
POST

Soon we will be closing the books on another year. 'Twas a memorable one for the two 21sts because of the reunions. Those of you who attended, I am certain, will attest to their success. Those of us who shared in the work were satisfied with the results. Your Rouen Post should also come in for a small share of the credit.

Now it comes time again to lift the veil of lighter and more pleasurable things to face our annual problem—that of paying our bills—which we have allowed to run along a bit too far, for which I am partly responsible. This being a sentimental, non-paying job, I have permitted the need for making a living to outweigh these other duties. Be that as it may, heretofore it has not been too difficult to interest our members in order that they would contribute annually sufficient funds for us to carry on. However, our last appeal did not arouse enough interest and as a result we fell behind. Presumably when we mentioned that if most members on our mailing list gave two bucks we would have no trouble in financing ourselves, too many took us at our word. Unfortunately that kicked back. Some of you who had previously come thru with larger sums took us literally and mailed the suggested \$2.00. That would have been splendid if 90% of our now 845 list had responded. As it developed only about 15% did.

A 100% response we know can never be attained. There are some folks who served with both our units, who still feel they were abused—that they should have been running the wars instead of Generals Pershing and Eisenhower. There isn't much we can do about those persons—except to keep them on the mailing list, hoping that with age they may mellow. We have several B.H. 21 members do just that—after many years. Hence we are indulgent and perhaps a bit on the wishful thinking side.

From the letters I have received since the reunions and the last issue of our paper, I am certain there are more of us who are interested in fostering the friendships of our army days than those who are not—and we shall carry on.

While on the subject of letters our printer, Robert Johnson, owner of Johnson Inc., is as considerate of our needs as if he were one of our own. A couple of days ago he telephoned me about our large envelope supply, said we are low and suggested that it may be a smart idea if he printed another 5000 for us—and perhaps save us some money. We told him to go ahead as long as our credit is good.

Sometimes I wonder if Bob and his crew do not get more out of the Rouen Post than some of our members. Wissman, his superintendent told me the other day that he feels as though he knows many of our members as well as we, having read and reread so much of our copy. But, gee, folks, getting laughs from Bill Stack's cartoons and Grethe Knudsen's strapless gown do not pay the expense incurred for paper, ink, type, wages and the many other costs which go into printing The Rouen Post.

When you have to fill a lot of voids to make this thing, The Rouen Post, a going proposition, all of the angles must be figured. I have sort of felt that if a letter I recently wrote Mr. Johnson were reprinted it would explain a part of the delay in getting out our last issue. I quote:

Johnson, Inc.  
St. Louis, Mo.  
Dear Bob:

*That was a fine job you did on our last issue of The Rouen Post. I accept your apology for the delay. You did have a bit of a time of it—with your help, machinery, et cetera. Of course, those are things our members in faraway places, California, Minnesota, Texas and New York, do not understand and they get impatient. They write me, "where is my copy of The Rouen Post." Periodically, I get a letter from Jim Hubbard in San Francisco writing that he had not received his copies for months. Frankly, I believe the guy does not file his copies and wants another chance to read them—afraid he has not remembered everything.*

*Now that you are back in first class operating conditions I am certain you will help me get out an interesting issue to end our year. It may have another flock of pages—but regardless of what it is I would like to have it reach our readers during the holiday season.*

*Thanks, again for your co-operation. You could not do better if you had been one of us.*  
Very truly yours,  
Bill Engel.

Mr. Johnson obligingly answered my letter.

Dear Bill:

*As long as I am head of my concern and you are the Editor of The Rouen Post, I'll try not worry about our account with you. You have given me your assurance that we will be taken care of—and that is enough for me. I'll go along with you.*

*I am sorry that I did not get to meet your gang during the reunions. I know you gave me an invitation—but I was not sure. At another time just put me down as I want to meet those "punks" you and the others have been writing about.*

*It would help your situation and mine if you can get your copy for the next issue to me as soon as possible. You know I do have much special work just before the holidays—but I want you to get a break for a change.*

*Thanks a lot, Bill, for your business and your co-operation.*  
Cordially,  
Johnson, Inc.  
Robert Lee Johnson

While on the subject of letters, had one from Colonel Cady today, from which I quote: "I liked your last edition very much and find myself hungry for news of the old gang between issues." Certainly the C.O.'s hunger for news of his command must be satisfied. I'll do my part if you will help me a bit with letters, articles, experiences of your war and mine—anything but the kind of stuff Dr. Allan Gilbert writes from Fayetteville, Arkansas.

And do not forget, folks, this job will be much easier, if we can get our annual collection of foldin' money underway right quickly. It does not make any difference in what form you send it, just so it is convertible into the so-called 'filthy lucre'. I know you'll do it gang and it will make for a genuinely happy holiday period if we can balance our books with our creditors ere the end of the year. Thanks.

Mail to The Rouen Post, 220 No. 4th St., St. Louis 2, Mo.  
Cordially,  
Bill Engel, Editor